(ii) Reimbursement of air freight charges at the rate of Rs. 20 per Kg. for export of small cardamom in consumer packs by air to middle-east destinations.

(iii) Sponsoring trade delegations and participation in trade fairs.

(d) Some of the reasons for decline in export of cardatmom are:—

(i) Uncompetitive prices of Indian cardamom in the international market vis-a-vis Guatemalan cardamom.

(ii) Stiff price competition offered by Guatemalan cardamom on account of its large production, high productivity and absence of domestic demand.

(iii) shift in consumer preference in the middle-east markets towards the low priced Guatemalan cardamom.

(e) Some of the steps taken by the Government to increase production/ productivity of cardamom include:—

(i) Production and supply of quality planting material.

(ii) Assistance for replantation of old diseased plants;

(iii) Subsidy for irrigation and land development; and

(iv) Assistance for purchase of plant protection equipment.

Quantitative Import Restrictions

907. SHRI N. THALAVAISUNDARAM:
SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN:

Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's trading partners have expressed concern over quantitative import restrictions on some consumer goods and also agricultural and textiles products;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter;

(c) whether Government have promised phasing out restrictions gradually; and

(d) the economic bearing on the Nation on account of such phasing out of restriction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) At the consultations held by the Committee on Balance-of-Payments-Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with India in January 1997 under Article XVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994, major developed countries were of the view that the present balance of payments situation did not warrant a continuation of import restrictions under the cover of balance of Payments provisions of Article XVIII. They were of the view that India could protect its domestic industry through appropriate tariffs. The Indian delegation had pressed the argument that while the monetary resources position might appear to be satisfactory, there was need for caution and that certain areas of concern had to be taken into account.

In the light of the discussions, the Committee agreed to resume the consultation in June 1997 to consider a plan, to be presented by India to eliminate the measrues notified under Article XVIII and to concude the consultations consistently with all relevant WTO balance of payments provisions.

Liberalising Import of Consumer Goods

908. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government have liberalised the import of 161 categories of goods including a number of consumer items; and

(b) if so, the details and reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, as part of the on going process of review of the Export & Import Policy, changes in the Import Policy of a few items have recently been made as per details indicated in Ministry of

Commerce Notification No. 23 (RE-96) dated 10.2.1997, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

Growth of trade between India and Latin America

909. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of protocol signed by India recently to set up trade with Latin American countries;

(b) the major constraints affecting growth of trade between India and Latin American Countries;

(c) the measures proposed to be taken to step up trade with Latin American countries; and

(d) the details of other liberalised opportunities to be given to private sector for economic cooperation to boost imports in Latin America?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) Recently, a Trade Agreement between India and Trinidad and Tobago was signed on 24th January, 1997. This is a general Trade Agreement and would serve to promote business relations between the two countries. The major constraint affecting growth of trade between India and Latin American countries is the great geographical distance between the two sides, because of which shipping time is longer and more expensive. However, this situation is slowly changing. Recently, the United Arab Emirates/Clipper Shipping Joint Venture Company have started direct shipping service between Mumbai and Sao Paulo, (Brazil). There is also greater awareness among the business communities of both the sides of the potential that exists for promoting and increasing trade. This has been possible because of an exchange of delegations and holding of trade fairs and exhibitions. In order to provide liberal opportunities to the private sector for economic cooperation to boost trade with Latin American and Caribbean region, 43 countries of this region have been given the benefit of claiming double weigthage on NFE or FOB basis earned by the export of products to these countries for recognition as Export House/Trading House/Star Trading House/Super Star Trading House.

Decentralisation of Industrial Planning

910. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the States representatives have emphasised the need for decentralisation of industrial planning aimed at delegating more powers to the States Governments in setting up new projects and expanding one specially in North Eastern States, at the seminar organised by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in association with Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta in December, 1996; and

(b) if so, in what manner Government propose to solve the problems raised by various representatives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) It has been ascertained that the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the affiliated local Chambers of Commerce organised a seminar on "Economic Resurgence of the Eastern Region" on 28th December, 1996 at Calcutta. The meeting was addressed by the Ministers of Industry of the Governments of West Bengal, Assam and Orissa. The proceedings of this seminar have not yet been conveyed to the Central Government.

Training for chilly exporters of Andhra Pradesh

911. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to train chilly exporters of Andhra Pradesh on how to preserve chilly for export and prevent over usage of pesticides and fungicides;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and